

Appl. No. 09/738,766
Amendment in response to
Office Action mailed 07/15/2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled):

Claim 2 (canceled):

Claim 3 (canceled):

Claim 4 (canceled): .

Claim 5 (canceled):

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method of forming a coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests comprising:

- i) filling a hollow cell with a growing medium wherein said growing medium comprises a plurality of thermal-sensitive fibres;
- ii) heat-treating said thermal-sensitive fibres to form an interconnected fibrous network within said growing medium;
- iii) planting a coniferous tree seed in said hollow cell;
- iv) germinating said coniferous tree seed into a seedling and nurturing said seedling to provide root development;
- v) after less than 7 months and sufficient root development of said

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seedling has occurred ~~and after 6.5 months or less~~, ejecting said seedling and growing medium from said hollow cell to form said coniferous tree seedling plug; and
vi) packing said coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests.

Claim 7 (previously amended): The method of claim 6 wherein said growing medium comprises a loose growing soil mixture consisting of approximately 95% by weight coconut coir fibre, and 5% by weight of thermal-sensitive fibre.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method of forming a coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests comprising:

- i) forming a first generally cylindrical plug of a first growing medium wherein said first growing medium comprises a network of thermal-sensitive fibre, by
 - a) filling a first hollow cell with a growing medium wherein said growing medium comprises a plurality of thermal-sensitive fibres;
 - b) heat-treating said thermal-sensitive fibres to form an interconnected fibrous network within said growing medium;
 - c) planting a coniferous tree seed in said first hollow cell;
 - d) germinating said coniferous tree seed into a seedling and nurturing said seedling to provide root development;
 - e) after sufficient root development of said seedling has occurred ~~and after 6.5 months or less~~, ejecting said seedling and growing medium from said first hollow cell to form said first generally cylindrical plug;
- ii) transplanting said first generally cylindrical plug into a second

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hollow cell with a second growing medium wherein said second growing medium comprises a plurality of thermal-sensitive fibres which have been heat-treated to form an interconnected fibrous network;
iii) after less than 7 months and sufficient root development of said seedling has occurred, ejecting said seedling and said first and second growing medium media from said second hollow cell to form said coniferous tree seedling plug; and
iv) packing said coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of forming a coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests comprising:

- i) forming a first generally cylindrical plug of a first growing medium wherein said first growing medium comprises a network of thermal-sensitive fibre, by
 - a) filling a first hollow cell with a growing medium wherein said growing medium comprises a plurality of thermal-sensitive fibres;
 - b) heat-treating said thermal-sensitive fibres to form an interconnected fibrous network within said growing medium;
 - c) planting a coniferous tree seed in said first hollow cell;
 - d) germinating said coniferous tree seed into a seedling and nurturing said seedling to provide root development;
 - e) after sufficient root development of said seedling has occurred, ejecting said seedling and growing medium from said first hollow cell to form said first cylindrical plug;
- ii) transplanting said first generally cylindrical plug into a second hollow cell with a growing medium wherein said growing medium

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comprises a second growing medium;

iii) after less than 7 months and sufficient root development of said seedling has occurred ~~and after 6.5 months or less~~, ejecting said seedling and said first and second growing medium media from said second hollow cell to form said coniferous tree seedling plug; and
iv) packing said coniferous tree seedling plug for use in re-planting coniferous forests.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 8 wherein said first growing medium comprises a loose growing soil mixture consisting of approximately 95% by weight coconut coir fibre, and 5% by weight of thermal-sensitive fibre.

Claim 11 (canceled):

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 9 wherein said second growing medium comprises a loose growing soil mixture comprising peat moss and sawdust.

Claim 13 (previously amended): The method of claim 6 wherein said growing medium comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with said growing medium, dipping said tray in a bath of hot water at a temperature of approximately 89 degrees Celsius, and then dipping said tray in a bath of water at tap water temperature, 5 to 10 degrees Celsius.

Claim 14 (previously amended): The method of claim 6 wherein said growing medium comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with said growing medium, and alternatively cascading water onto the tray to heat and cool the tray.

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Claim 15 (canceled):

Claim 16 (canceled):

Claim 17 (canceled):

Claim 18 (canceled):

Claim 19 (canceled):

Claim 20 (canceled):

Claim 21 (canceled):

Claim 22 (currently amended): The method of claim 8 wherein said first and second growing medium media comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is are formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with one of said growing medium media, dipping said tray in a bath of hot water at a temperature of approximately 89 degrees Celsius, and then dipping said tray in a bath of water at tap water temperature, 5 to 10 degrees Celsius.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The method of claim 8 wherein said first and second growing medium media comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is are formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with one of said growing medium media, and alternatively cascading water onto the tray to heat and cool the tray.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of claim 9 wherein said first growing

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medium comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with said growing medium, dipping said tray in a bath of hot water at a temperature of approximately 89 degrees Celsius, and then dipping said tray in a bath of water at tap water temperature, 5 to 10 degrees Celsius.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 9 wherein said first growing medium comprising a network of thermal-sensitive fibre is formed by filling a tray of hollow cells with said growing medium, and alternatively cascading water onto the tray to heat and cool the tray.

Claim 26 (canceled):

Claim 27 (currently amended): The method of claim 6 wherein said seedling and growing medium are ejected from said hollow cell after 6 months or less.

Claim 28 (currently amended): The method of claim 6 8 wherein said seedling and said first and second growing medium media are ejected from said second hollow cell after 6 months or less.

Claim 29 (currently amended): The method of claim 6 9 wherein said seedling and said first and second growing medium media are ejected from said second hollow cell after 6 months or less.

Claim 30 (new): The method of claim 8 wherein said seedling and said first growing medium are ejected from said first hollow cell after between 6 and 12 weeks.

Claim 31 (new): The method of claim 9 wherein said seedling and said first growing

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medium are ejected from said first hollow cell after between 6 and 12 weeks.

Claim 32 (new): The method of claim 9 wherein said first growing medium comprises a loose growing soil mixture consisting of approximately 95% by weight coconut coir fibre, and 5% by weight of thermal-sensitive fibre.

Claim 33 (new): The method of claim 8 wherein said second growing medium comprises a loose growing soil mixture consisting of approximately 95% by weight coconut coir fibre, and 5% by weight of thermal-sensitive fibre.

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